

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 04170 281124Z
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TAGS: SHUM, PINT, IV
SUBJ: PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY YACE'S
SPEECH AT OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY: MUNICIPAL
ELECTIONS

REF: ABIDJAN 3996

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT OF THE IVORIAN NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY, PHILIPPE YACE, CONVENED THE FIRST REGULAR
SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY FOR 1978. IN HIS SPEECH
YACE TOUCHED BRIEFLY AND ALONG FAMILIAR LINES ON
THE RECENT RECONCILIATION WITH GUINEA AND ON THE RE-
CENT CAIRO MEETING OF THE UNION OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS.
MOST OF HIS SPEECH, HOWEVER, WAS DEVOTED TO GRANTING
STATUS OF COMMUNE TO 26 IVORIAN TOWNS THAT WILL
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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 04170 281124Z

RESULT IN SOME STILL UNDETERMINED FORM OF MUNICIPAL
ELECTIONS.
END SUMMARY
1. ON RECENT RECONCILIATION WITH GUINEA, YACE STATED
THE PAST WAS FORGOTTEN, THAT A NEW ERA OF COOPERATION
AND OF GOOD NEIGHBORS HAD BEGUN; AND THAT THIS WAS A
CLEAR ILLUSTRATION OF THE BROTHERHOOD THAT LINKS ALL AFRICAN

PEOPLES IN WHICH PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET HAD PROFOUND FAITH. REFERRING TO HIS BEING CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS, YACE REVIEWED RESULTS OF RECENT CAIRO MEETING AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THE UNION WOULD BECOME FOR AFRICA WHAT THE LUXEMBURG PARLIAMENT WAS FOR EUROPE.

2. BY FAR THE GREATEST PART OF YACE'S SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO THE GRANTING OF COMMUNE STATUS TO EVERY CENTER OF EVEN MODEST POPULATION DENSITY IN IVORY COAST. YACE STATED THAT STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO BUILD A NATION OUT OF NUMEROUS ETHNIC GROUPS. MOREOVER, JUST AS IVORY COAST HAS NOT HAD SUFFICIENT CADRE TO TOTALLY IVORIANIZE THE PRIVATE SECTOR, SHE HAS ALSO NOT HAD, THROUGHOUT MOST OF HER HISTORY, SUFFICIENT CADRE TO PERMIT SOME DECENTRALIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. BUT WITH TIME THINGS HAVE CHANGED. "WHAT WAS NOT FEASIBLE AND PREMATURE IN 1960 HAS BECOME, 18 YEARS LATER, POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE." THUS, COMMUNE STATUS HAS BEEN GIVEN TO 26 URBAN CENTERS.

3. THERE REMAINS THE TASK OF CHOOSING AN EVLECTORAL SYSTEM AND A FORM OF MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION. FOR THIS PURPOSE, YACE ANNOUNCED THAT A DELEGATION FROM THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF IVORY UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 ABIDJA 04170 281124Z

COAST (PDCI) WOULD SOON VISIT EVERY URBAN CENTER THAT HAS BEEN GRANTED COMMUNE STATUS. ON BEHALD OF PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET, YACE INVITED ALL THE CITIZENRY TO PARTICIPATE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE DELEGATION. CONCLUDING HIS SPEECH, YACE INSISTED THE OFFICE OF A MAYOR WOULD NOT BE AN EMPTY TITLE BUT AN ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.

4. COMMENT: IN CONVERSATIONS WITH NUMEROUS PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS UPCOUNTRY AND IN ABIDJAN, EMBASSY OFFICER HAS LEARNED MUCH CONFUSION AND SPECULATION EXISTS AS TO HOW AND WHEN ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. THE IMMINENT UPCOUNTRY TOUR OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU DELEGATION WILL FURTHER STIR THE POT. ACCORDING TO SOME PARTY OFFICIALS, THE DELEGATION WILL SINCERELY LISTEN TO AND SOLICIT IDEAS FROM LOCAL CITIZENS. WHILE SOME PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXPECT ELECTIONS IN JUNE, YACE'S CHEF DE CABINET STATED TO EMBASSY OFFICER THERE WAS NO FIXED DATE AND THAT ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD AS LATE AS AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER. HE ADDED THERE WAS GENUINE DEBATE WITHIN THE PARTY AS TO THE NATURE AND TIMING OF

ELECTIONS. THEREFORE, MORE TIME THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO PREPARE THE ELECTION WOULD BE NECESSARY. IN ANY CASE, THE DELEGATION WOULD HAVE TO CONCLUDE ITS LENGTHY TOUR AND DELIBERATIONS BEFORE MAKING RECOMMENDATION TO THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP. COOKE

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